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# Take me Drunk I'm Home

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# take me drunk i'm HOME

by Christopher Clair  
photos by Andrew Mroch

**CyRide's Moonlight  
Express provides  
students with a  
safe and oftentimes  
entertaining way  
to get around town  
at night**

Dressed in a leather jacket, baseball cap and a significant amount of his own drool, the man standing near the front of the bus captures the attention of the vehicle's occupants.

"All right! We're gonna do 'Cheers,' okay?" he half-asks, half-demands the other passengers on the small bus. "A one and a two!" He brings his arms up as if he were conducting the entire group on the bus.

And a response is evoked.

"Makin' your way in the world today takes everything you got!" the young men and women on the bus scream in off-pitch voices. The timing is less than perfect, as this choir is without rhythm.

After a couple of lines, the man in leather finds that he is one of about three people who are still singing. He waves his arms in a displeased manner at the rest of the people. "Ah, fuck it!" he shouts as he makes his way to a seat. He slumps into it and pulls the bill of his cap over his eyes.

The others on the bus are still in jubilant spirits as they make their way to their Franklin Street destination. The bus pulls up, and the occupants file out of the vehicle, hungry for their next party stop.

Most of them take the time to thank the Moonlight Express driver.

A slower night. The door opens, and a man stumbles his way up the two steps of the bus.

"Where ya headin'?" the driver asks, and a wide yet genuine smile spreads across his face.

"Towers," the man responds as he makes his way to one of the seats that occupy the back half of the bus. There is seating for 15 people, although at present

there isn't much demand for it.

As he makes his way to his seat, he nearly staggers into another young man who is standing near the door. The man on foot hardly throws him a glance and continues staring straight ahead at nothing in particular.

There are six small light bulbs to illuminate the sparse interior space of the vehicle, allowing for only a dull glow to light the area. The windows rattle as the bus moves over potholes, sending a loud interruption through the silence of the shuttle.

The bus zips up the heavily-populated Welch Avenue, where the pedestrians of the night greet the shuttle vehicle with hearty welcomes.

"The drunk bus! Yeah!"

The reputation of this short bus is well-known on the campus of Iowa State University. If you're out on the town, but are in no condition to drive your own set of wheels, or you don't feel like hoofing it back to the dorms, call Moonlight Express.

The "drunk bus" will take you home.

This nickname is given as a result of the condition of most of the occupants who take the bus home. The general smell of the environment has a slight sweetness from the exhaling breaths of many inebriated students. The bus becomes the site of many crazy incidents that turn into rather popular myths on the ISU campus.

But this particular night is a prime example of what the Moonlight Express provides for the students of ISU: A safe way for people to get home late at night.

Drunk or not.

CyRide, the bus service which is available to ISU students as well as Ames residents, has quite a load of passengers. Including Moonlight Express riders, CyRide has more than 2,690,000 people ride to their destinations aboard its vehicles.

"We're fourth or fifth in the nation for passengers per capita," Moonlight Express Driver Randy Hoskin says. "But I still wish even more people would use this service. GSB's not getting their money's worth."

"Some people say that we are providing a limousine service for drunk people in Ames," Hoskin says. "But if we are getting people home safely, then I can't see what there is to criticize."

Jim Robinson, an Ames police officer, is not one of the detractors. "If this service helps get people off the streets, if it keeps drunk drivers off the road, then I can't see anything wrong," he says. "It gets people from point A to point B."

Robinson also disagrees that Moonlight Express leads to less responsibility with alcohol.

"I really don't think the service makes it more convenient for students to go out and get drunk," he says. "They realize there is still a chance of getting charged with





We always thought, "Seems like you should be able to bring lumber on the bus." Little did we know the consequences of our actions.

He treats you right, doesn't he? He takes you for a ride...where you want to go. He's easy to get along with. Plus, he's comfy.

Ok, he's not a guy. He's Cy.

Ride, that is.

Collectively, he is an experience...a fascination. He takes care of you when you're feeling down (and drunk). But he's not a push-over.

He's an enforcer of the rules.

But rules are made to be broken.

Luckily, *ethos* is there.

## the rules...

- Certain items are prohibited on Cy-Ride for safety reasons. No gasoline or flammable liquids; No fire arms, BB guns or airguns; No animals (except trained service animals); No bicycles or toboggans; No furniture or mattresses; No large pieces of lumber; No open alcoholic beverages; No car batteries.
- Maximum of 3 grocery bags per adult is allowed.
- Baby strollers, shopping carts, and other items must be kept out of aisles.



public intoxication. I don't think the bus comes into play when students decide how much to drink."

A young woman sits in one of the seats on the bus, leaning her head against the near window as she talks with a male acquaintance sitting next to her.

"You should've been on here that one night," she says in slurred speech. "There was this guy sitting over there," she continues, pausing on the word "there" while shooting a lazy head motion to her right. "There was a guy who just lit up a joint and started puffing away." She allows a giggle to escape from her mouth, which fills the air with a fresh dose of alcoholic haze.

"It was so funny."

The man laughs as they ride in relative serenity.

Randy Hoskin may talk a lot while behind the wheel, but his eyes are fixed on the road and on his stops to see if he has any prospective passengers.

"One thing I've noticed since I started driving is that the cops don't obey many of the traffic laws," Hoskin says as he watches a cop car fly through an intersection near the Maple-Willow-Larch dormitory complex.

"The only thing that really sucks about this job would be the hours," Hoskin says. The Moonlight Express runs from 10 p.m. until 2 a.m., give or take a few minutes. Hoskin's route on this particular night takes us from the new RCA complex out to the Towers and back again.

"There are footprints all over the ceiling of this bus," Hoskin says, motioning in an upward pointing gesture to get the point across. The dust imprints of a pair of sneakers decorate the ceiling in different spots.

"People like to flip around on the handrail," Hoskin says.

On some nights, hanging from the handrail might be the only way to find a little elbow room in the small vehicle.

"Yeah, I had 52 people in this bus at one time," he says, glancing back every now and again to make sure someone is hearing his story. "Man, we hit a bump, and the shocks did not move at all. We were pretty loaded down."

With comfortable seating for 15 and standing room for about 10 more, claustrophobia sets in just thinking about having twice the comfortable number on this ride.

"Yeah, there's some pretty crazy things that have happened on these buses," Hoskin says. "But you might be surprised to hear that most of the people that ride this bus respect the bus."

"But the fighting on these buses is endless."

Hoskin says although fights are common, they usually do not get out of

control. "The police are very helpful," he says. "Normally they get to the bus within 30 seconds of the start of the fight."

Hoskin whips the bus around a corner, then continues. "That's part of the problem with the conception of this service," he says. "That's what most people see, the 'drunk bus.' But there are people who stay on campus to study during the weekends or those who do their grocery shopping late at night that really benefit from this service."

Hoskin slowly moves the bus to the side of the road where two people are flagging the bus down. The door opens, and

**"Some people say that we are providing a limousine service for drunk people in Ames," Hoskin says. "But if we are getting people home safely, then I can't see what there is to criticize."**

two people emerge into the hazy light. They are dressed head to toe in black with their faces painted in the spirit of the mime.

"Can you take us to South Fifth?" one mime asks.

"Sorry, you'll have to try the guy who is running down that way," Hoskin answers, gesturing in the general direction of west.

"Okay, thank you!" the other mime says as they step off the bus. Hoskin pulls away and resumes his route.

"Wow," one man standing along the wall says in slow, careful speech. "I just saw two mimes talk."

"That's cool."

A crackly voice invades the air. "Can you make a stop at... Hyland Avenue?" the dispatcher asks.

Hoskin responds with a positive answer, then slams the radio transmitter back into its cradle.

"A detour — yeah!" he yells as he whips around the parking lots near the Towers. The bus barrels down the road

toward its new destination. The two passengers don't quite share the enthusiasm of the driver; they sit and stare straight ahead. One man is having trouble keeping his eyes from rolling back into his head.

"Another aspect of this job is that you find out where all of the really good party houses are," Hoskin says.

As the bus pulls to a stop at its Hyland location, the cheers begin.

"Hey, guys, it's the drunk bus! Let's go!"

Two young men and a young woman board the bus and find seats. "Thank God they have this thing," the woman says. "It sure beats the hell out of walking."

"Or driving," one man chimes in.

They all nod as the bus brings them to their homes.

"A woman steps onto the bus, and her shirt grabs the attention of every passenger on the bus, mine included," Hoskin says as he tells one of his favorite stories. "It's one of those that zips all the way up, only hers is only zipped about halfway."

He revs the engine to get up a hill, then continues his story. "Well, as she is getting on, the people behind her are getting a bit impatient," he says. "She ends up getting shoved forward, which causes her shirt to come unzipped completely."

He pauses. "There's no bra. And she just walks to her seat with the thing wide open like that." A smile sweeps across his face, which he makes little effort to hide.

"That was very interesting."

One of the male passengers, who is only half-listening, suddenly looks all around the bus. When his search comes up empty, he allows himself to slip back down in his seat.

"I am allowed to take tips, but no more than \$3," Hoskin says. "I have received things like a candy bar..."

He pauses for a second, then adds, "Oh yeah, I got a kiss once."

A chorus of "Oooohs" and "Ahhhs" comes from the crowd that is riding the bus. Hoskin waves his hand at them. "It was on the cheek! It was on the cheek," he says, a little chuckle escaping as he says so.

A couple sits in one of the seats, their heads are tilting back in a relaxed position. Their heads bob up and down as the bus goes over bumps, but they don't seem to mind. As the bus pulls up to a red light, the woman looks over at her male companion.

"This ride is a lifesaver," she says. "I'm so happy we caught it."

The man laughs and remains in his relaxed position. After a few moments of silence, he says something.

"Drunk bus rules, man."

The woman nods her head.

"Yeah, it does."





When our A'n'E editor gets a hankerin' for some propane, there's no where she won't take it.



Who wouldn't enjoy slugging a well-disguised 40 and hanging out with the extra-attractive CyRide driver?



You know what they say about people who sit in the back of the bus. They're trouble.



Cool cats love CyRide. Unfortunately, *real* cats get the shaft when it comes to public transportation.



CyRide drivers now carry hand-guns to make sure the *ethos* mascot, Uncle Beast, stays off the bus. He is, after all, quite the animal.

Our editor-in-chief got on CyRide for two reasons: to drink some booze and take some hostages. Looks like he just ran out of booze.



The *ethos* crew waves good-bye to all the losers who conform to CyRide's rules. Yep, we're just that rebellious.

The clouds part to direct CyRide Photographer Andrew Mroch to the next bus stop. Will the bus ever come? Perhaps not, if we don't follow the rules.



photo by Jenni McKinney



Once evicted, CyRide is a great means of transportation for mattresses. If the driver wants to charge extra, just pack a piece.